

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 12555 01 OF 02 030905Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 DHA-02 ACDA-07 IO-13 /081 W
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R 030700Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6258
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 12555

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: POLITICAL REACTION TO THE ANDREOTTI VISIT

SUMMARY: WHILE THE ITALIAN POLITICAL WORLD GENERALLY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN GENUINELY GRATIFIED BY THE WARM RECEPTION ACCORDED PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI IN THE UNITED STATES, DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE VISIT'S SIGNIFICANCE ARE EVIDENT. THE PCI DAILY L'UNITA HAS BEEN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE VISIT AND MAINTAINS THAT PRESIDENT CARTE'S EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN ITALY "AS IT IS" (PCI QUOTE) IMPLIES A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PCI AND A WILLINGNESS TO REGARD THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS WITHOUT "DISCRIMINATION" OR "PRECONCEPTIONS". DC PARTY DAILY IL POPOLO (WHICH STRONGLY REFLECTS MORO'S CONTROL) DOWNPLAYED CARTER'S PERSONAL PRAISE OF ANDREOTTI AND
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PAGE 02 ROME 12555 01 OF 02 030905Z

ATTRIBUTED THE PRESIDENT'S FAVORABLE JUDGMENT TO A RECOGNITION OF ITALY(S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE, AND APPRECIATION OF THE DC'S SUCCESS IN LIMITING THE SIX-PARTY ACCORD TO CLEARLY DEFINED POINTS OF PROGRAM WHICH NEITHER ALTER THE CURRENT POLITICAL ALIGNMENT NOR ENHANCE THE PCI'S GOVERNMENTAL ROLE. THE PSI AND THE SMALL LAY PARTIES, WHILE JUDGING THE VISIT A QUALIFIED SUCCESS,

ASSESS THE VISIT MORE CAUTIOUSLY, POINTING OUT THE MANY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH THE COUNTRY HAS YET TO SOLVE. END SUMMARY.

1. ALL OF THE PARTIES OF ITALY'S "CONSTITUTIONAL ARC" APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN GRATIFIED BY THE WARM RECEPTION ACCORDED PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI IN WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT CARTER'S AFFIRMATION OF CONFIDENCE IN ITALY AS AN ALLY AND PARTNER, AND HIS PRAISE OF ITALY'S EFFORTS IN DEALING WITH ITS ECONOMIC CRISIS. DIFFERENCES ARE EVIDENT IN THE MANNER IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL PARTIES INTERPRET THE VISIT AS A WHOLE, HOWEVER, GIVING RISE TO A LIVELY DEBATE AS TO WHAT "MESSAGE", IF ANY, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WISHED TO CONVEY THROUGH ITS STATEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE VISIT.

2. AMONG THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC REACTIONS HAS BEEN FROM THE PCI. PARTY DAILY L'UNITA STATED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S AFFIRMATION OF FAITH IN ITALY "AS IT IS", COUPLED WITH THE GRANTING OF A VISA TO ITS CORRESPONDENT ALBERTO JACOVIELLO TO OPEN A L'UNITA BUREAU IN THE US, REPRESENTS A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PCI. JACOVIELLO, WHO COVERED THE VISIT FOR L'UNITA, NOTED "GREATER REALISM IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND THE UNITED STATES", INCLUDING A WILLINGNESS TO REGARD THE PCI IN THE FUTURE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ROME 12555 01 OF 02 030905Z

WITHOUT "DISCRIMINATION" OR "PRECONDITIONS". HE HYPOTHESIZED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S PRAISE FOR ANDREOTTI WAS INTENDED TO "STRENGTHEN HIS (ANDREOTTI'S) POSITION WITHIN THE DC", AGAINST THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE PROGRAM ACCORD AND FURTHER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DC AND PCI.

3. IN ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE VISIT, IL POPOLO, THE DC DAILY CONTROLLED BY MORO AND ZACCAGNINI, SOUGHT TO CHARACTERIZE THE VISIT IN TERMS OF THE SUCCESS OF DC POLICIES AND DOWNPLAY THE PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL TRIUMPH. IT ATTRIBUTED THE VISIT'S SUCCESS TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECOGNITION OF ITALY'S "SERIOUS EFFORT TO RESTORE THE ECONOMY", THE DC'S STEADFAST ADHERENCE TO THE US ALLIANCE AND ITALY'S TRADITIONAL FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION, AND THE DC'S FIRMNESS IN NEGOTIATING AN ACCORD ON A SPECIFIC PROGRAM WITHOUT UPSETTING THE CURRENT POLITICAL ALIGNMENT. THE INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATION EFFORT, IT STRESSED, WAS CONDUCTED BY THE PARTY RATHER THAN THE GOVERNMENT. THE DC, "WITH THE RIGOROUS PRECISION OF THE DIRECTION OF MORO AND ZACCAGNINI", INSISTED ON THE EXCLUSION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FROM THE

NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM ACCORD AND HELD THE LINE
AGAINST THE LEFT'S ATTEMPTS TO FORCE A CHANGE IN THE
MINORITY GOVERNMENT FORMULA. PRESIDENT
CARTER'S PRAISE FOR ANDREOTTI, THEREFORE, REFLECTS
HIS SUPPORT FOR THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE DC UNDER THE
LEADERSHIP OF MORO AND ZACCAGNINI. COMMENT: THE DC
EDITORIAL REFLECTS A DEGREE OF CONCERN
WHICH WE HAVE SENSED IN SOME OF OUR CONTACTS WITH DC
OFFICIALS THAT THE COVERAGE OF THE VISIT IN THE
ITALIAN PRESS HAS CREATED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE
CARTER ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS ANDREOTTI INDISPENSIBLE
FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ITALIAN POLITICAL STABILITY AND
ECONOMIC PROGRESS. THE DC IS A CONGLOMERATE OF SEVERAL
SUB-PARTIES, EACH HEADED BY A FACTIONAL CHIEFTAIN.
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PAGE 04 ROME 12555 01 OF 02 030905Z

IT IS THEREFORE NOT SURPRISING THAT ANY INCREASE IN
THE STATURE OF A PARTY LEADER (PARTICULARLY THROUGH
AN APPARENT BLESSING BY WASHINGTON) WILL MEET WITH
INTERNAL, FACTIONAL RESISTANCE. END COMMENT.

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PAGE 01 ROME 12555 02 OF 02 030916Z
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INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 12555

4. THE REACTIONS OF THE PSI, PRI, AND PSDI HAVE BEEN THE MOST CAUTIOUS AND LEAST ENTHUSIASTIC. BOTH THE PSDI AND THE PRI EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THE "TRIUMPAHNT" TONE OF ITALIAN PRESS COVERAGE OF THE VISIT. LA VOCE REPUBBLICANA, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY DAILY, CAUTIONED THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO READ THE PRESIDENT'S POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ITALIAN SITUATION AS SOME SORT OF "BENEDICTION" FOR ALL GOVERNMENT POLICIES, PRESENT AND FUTURE. LA VOCE NOTED THAT "AT TEMPESTUOUS MOMENTS IT IS PLEASING AND CONFORTING TO SEEK CONSOLATION ABROAD", BUT REMINDED ITS READERS THAT UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR UNREST ARE INCREASING, AND "THE WORD 'AUSTERITY' HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN FOR MANY MONTHS". IT WARNED THAT THE ECONOMIC PICTURE WAS NOT NEARLY AS BRIGHT AS

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PAGE 02 ROME 12555 02 OF 02 030916Z

INDICATED IN THE WASHINGTON TALKS.

5. THE MOST CRITICAL REACTION HAS COME FROM THE SOCIALIST PARTY. WHILE NOTING THAT THE VISIT WAS SUCCESSFUL, PSI DAILY AVANTI* WARNED THAT "EVERY SUCCESS HAS ITS LIMITS". AVANTI* ACCUSED ANDREOTTI OF SACRIFICING THE INTERESTS OF EUROPE AND DETENTE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN PRESIDENT CARTER'S BLESSING BY SUPPORTING THE ADMINISTRATION'S CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. IT ATTRIBUTED THE PRESIDENT'S ENTHUSIASM FOR ANDREOTTI TO THE NEED TO FIND A FRIEND IN WESTERN EUROPE AFTER RECENT DIFFERENCES WITH FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD AND GERMAN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. AVANTI* WENT ON TO QUESTION THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE US AGREEMENT TO HELP FINANCE NUCLEAR REACTORS IN ITALY, POINTING OUT THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD BE TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE UNITED STATES FOR NUCLEAR FUEL, AND SUGGESTING THAT THIS MIGHT NOT BE IN ITALY'S BEST INTEREST.

6. COMMENT: IN SALTING THEIR COMMENTARY ON THE VISIT WITH CRITICISM OF ANDREOTTI, THE LAY PARTIES HAVE ALSO TRIED TO COUNTERACT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE US CONSIDERS ANDREOTTI INDISPENSABLE. IN DOING SO THEY AVOIDED SPECULATION ON THE PRESIDENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DC AND THE PCI AND SOUGHT TO ATTRIBUTE HIS PRAISE FOR ANDREOTTI TO THE PURSUIT OF US INTERESTS (I.E. HUMAN RIGHTS) WHICH ARE NOT CONNECTED TO ITALIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. UNDERLYING THE LAY PARTIS RESERVED ATTITUDE IS THE

FEAR (PARTICULARY IN THE WAKE OF THE PROGRAM ACORD)
THAT ANDREOTTI AND THE DC MAY INTERPRET THE VISIT'S
SUCCESS AS A SANCTION FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A
PREFERENTIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PCI WHICH
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PAGE 03 ROME 12555 02 OF 02 030916Z

WOULD LEAVE THE SMALL PARTIES INCREASINGLY ON THE
SIDELINES.HOLMES

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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